

at the same time too abstruse for their youthful minds. To comprehend and apply one truth is more advantageous to them, than to advance ten propositions, none of which they have been able to understand or retain in their memories; or, perhaps, forget in their attention to the nine, the one which was of the most importance. Oh God, assist me to copy more closely the example which thy dear Son has left us, of imparting instruction; and enable me to acquire the simplicity, conciseness, and impressive style of my dear Master. Let me, before I propound any doctrine to the children, first enquire, If it be necessary? If it be profitable? If some other would not be more appropriate? If it will be more suitable to their capacities? What will be the object attained by it? And whether it will give them only the appearance of learning without any useful result? And as I am able to answer these questions, let me adopt or cast aside my subject."

Such was the devotional spirit in which Overberg pursued that occupation, which is so often considered as of trifling consequence; he acted as in the presence of God. He felt and expressed his conviction, from the great, nay, the all powerful influence, which God has given to babes and children, upon the hearts of men, of the infinite importance to the church of God of religious instruction being imparted to the young, and of drawing the youthful mind to intercourse with God in prayer; and that should this influence, by the formation of christian principles, be sanctified to the glory of God, the power of infidelity would be conquered, a bulwark raised against the inroads of prevailing depravity, and the peace of God be brought into the hearts of the parents, and the homes of the children.

A sincere and affectionate guide to the young, he shone no less in his intercourse with others more advanced in years. Numbers who could estimate the value of a faithful conductor, as one who could lead them in the way of life, placed confidence in him, and sought direction and advice from him as their spiritual father.—To these he was ever a true counsellor, and watched over their souls as one who must give an account. He was often known to repeat to the theological students the solemn truth, that it is impossible for any one to lead another in the ways of righteousness, who has not himself trod in the same paths; no one can teach another to pray, to strive, to fight the good fight of faith, who has not himself prayed, and wrestled, and conquered. Overberg discharged the office of overseer to those who were committed to his care, with patience and perseverance. The universal esteem which was awakened by his irreproachable life and simple manners, the opportunity of usefulness which his perfect acquaintance with the human heart, and his own experience in the dealings of God with man afforded him, awakened in his people the most unbounded confidence, and imparted a more than common weight and interest to all he said. He was, in the truest sense of the word, a father to all his flock. He watched and prayed for them, he loved them all. He used every means to secure them from falling again into the snares of the world, always holding himself responsible for their welfare. As long as they appeared to continue in the narrow path, he withheld all unnecessary reproof, so that he was even charged by some with indifference. To these he answered: "Do not fear; I shall soon perceive when warning and reproof are necessary." And did the time really come when their zeal seemed to abate, or their opinions and energies take a wrong direction, he spared neither advice nor reproof, till he found them restored to the good old way. He knew the dangers of the road, the numerous paths which lead astray, the deceitfulness of self-love, and the first symptoms of lukewarmness.

The rich or the poor, the child or the man, were to Overberg of equal importance; for he saw only the immortal soul, purchased by the blood of Christ. Some of his more learned and fashionable friends have been often displeased, after having waited in the anti-room for some time, hearing him in earnest conversation with another guest, at finding that it was only a poor country woman, or an old notorious beggar, who had so long engaged his attention. He became all things to all men, that he might win all to Christ; and the spiritual necessities of the poorest child, were as important to him as those of the richest of his flock.

A feeling of confidence was awakened on the first appearance and first conversation with this unassuming man. A short anecdote will serve to strengthen this remark. One cold, rainy, uncomfortable afternoon, he felt an unconquerable desire to walk out.

Before the gate he saw a man pass with an uncertain step, standing for a moment still, and then, after looking hastily round, continue onward at a quick pace. Overberg followed and overtook him, saluted him kindly, and began a conversation, to which the stranger at first answered repulsively, but afterwards continued with so much confidence, that he at last confessed he had been a reprobate from his youth, and his despair was so tormenting, that he had determined to commit suicide. "Would you then be released from despair?" asked Overberg. The man started at the question. Overberg continued to speak with him in the most consoling language, took him home with him, prayed with him, and from that day the man became a changed character.

He walked, if possible, every day; and choosing the most unfrequented road, it was always a period allotted to self-examination and prayer. He dined and supped constantly with the students, and during these meals, conversed with great vivacity, but always upon improving subjects, with the Rev. — Melchers, Prebendary, and with the Vicar, Dr. Bullenhar. He was very abstemious, and never took wine but as a medicine.

In the pages immediately preceding, we have spoken almost exclusively of the external operations of our much-esteemed Bernhard Overberg. Let us now direct our attention to the internal principle from whence this active usefulness arose.

His whole life might be termed a walking in the fear of God. From his heavenly Father he had implored the power requisite to live according to his will; for he remarked,—"If the Lord build not the house, they labour in vain that build it." How can we possess the power to carry good intentions into effect, since it is not even in our power to think of them at the proper time?

When reading any thing which interested him exceedingly, he made a rule of laying it aside from time to time, to consider and make himself master of the subject, and also that his judgment might not be led away by his feelings.

It was with unremitting perseverance and great inward struggles, that Overberg acquired the cheerful, happy, and affectionate temper, for which he was characterized; for by nature his disposition was disposed to melancholy and reserve. In his journal, we often find him complaining of this trait in his character, but he sought to overcome it by faith and dependance on God; and he writes, August 10, 1793,—"I am convinced that it is not only our duty to guard against injuring, disquieting, or disturbing the peace of others, by our discontented and morose temper and manners; but also, as much as possible, by an appearance of happiness, by kindness, and cheerfulness of mind, to excite the same temper in those around us; for I feel persuaded that we cannot recommend the christian religion better, than by showing a peaceful, satisfied and equable cheerfulness of spirits, so that by our happiness others may be led to see the genuine nature of our faith.—God is the centre and source of bliss, and in this we must endeavour to reflect his image. God rewardeth the cheerful giver.—Rejoice at all times in the Lord, and again I say, rejoice; Who soever shall give a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward. May not a cheerful countenance, a happy temper, often prove as refreshing to our neighbour as a cup of cold water to the thirsty? And will not then the expression of our hope and trust, by a uniformly happy demeanour, meet also with a reward? Would not many rather endure a high degree of thirst, than see the countenance of their brother in Christ clothed in a veil of gloomy dissatisfaction?"

Having endeavoured to give the reader a slight sketch of the life, character and ruling principles of Bernhard Overberg, we turn to view the close of his earthly course.

The last days of his life were rendered particularly happy, by the establishment of a seminary for the education of school-masters, in Buren. This excellent institution was opened in May 1825; but the Normal course of lectures were at the same time to be continued for two years longer. Speaking on this subject, Overberg remarked to a friend: "Now I can die happy, for the Buren Seminary will take my place." Once more, in 1826, he went through the Normal lectures with his usual energy, but at the same time prepared in various ways for his final dismissal. He arranged all his papers, made his will, and was often deeply engaged in self-examination. Among other of his friends, he sent for his old fellow-student, Vicar Bullenhar, and said to him: "My death is near, and I have several things to say to you."